

Waffles by EmeraldTulip

Category: Stranger Things (TV 2016)

Genre: F/F, Tumblr Prompt, and a little stoncy if you squint, and some past lucas/max, because el will not date a girl who doesn't like waffles, but it's mostly just max doesn't like waffles and el is offended and takes her out on a waffle date, there's some background byeler

Language: English

Characters: Eleven (Stranger Things), Jennifer Hayes, Lucas Sinclair, Max (Stranger Things), Will Byers

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Summary:

Here's the problem: Max doesn't really like breakfast. In all her seventeen years on the planet, she never has. There's no reason for it, she just... doesn't. That means pancakes, cereal, bacon (that one's okay, it's used in sandwiches and Max is definitively not a vegetarian), and, most offensively, waffles. Max doesn't like waffles.

Waffles

Author's Note:

anon prompt on tumblr: can we get some romantic elmax + going on a waffle date?

the answer is yes, anon! thank you for the prompt!

(three years after season 2. we've got some established elmax, a little background byeler, some lumax friendship/past relationship, implied stoncy if you squint, and jennifer hayes cameo. i hope you like it!)

Here's the problem: Max doesn't really like breakfast. In all her seventeen years on the planet, she never has. There's no reason for it, she just... doesn't. That means pancakes, cereal, bacon (that one's okay, it's used in sandwiches and Max is definitively not a vegetarian), and, most offensively, waffles. Max doesn't like waffles.

The Byers-Hopper family only is made aware of this one day, the summer before senior year, when Will offers Eggos to El and Max, who are on the couch.

"Pass," Max tells Will. "I'm not a huge breakfast fan."

"But... they're *waffles*," El says, brow furrowing.

"I know," Max replies confusedly. "I don't really like them."

"No," El says decisively, and Max frowns at her.

"What?"

"I'm not going out with someone who doesn't like waffles," El tells her calmly.

Max snorts. "Yeah, you obviously are. *I* am someone who doesn't like waffles. And unless I've been hallucinating the last five months, I'm dating *you*."

"I can confidently say you weren't hallucinating," Will laughs as he walks past, the door to the fridge swinging closed. Then he frowns. "Unless we're both hallucinating, which isn't out of the question and wouldn't be out of character for me."

El laughs. "You're not hallucinating. But, Max, no girlfriend of mine will dislike waffles, so we're going to go out. Will, we're not working tonight, right?"

He thinks for a minute. "No. That's good timing, though, I'm inviting Mike over."

"Who's surprised?" Max mutters. "Not me."

Will gives her a look. "Have fun," he says before sweeping down the hall.

"El," Max says once El's brother's door clicks shut, "you're not really going to take me out for breakfast at *night*, are you?"

El grins, grabbing her by the collar and pressing a kiss to the corner of her mouth. "You know me. Am I the joking type?"

"No," Max sighs, wrapping an arm around her. "No, you're not."

"Like... Lucas, I love her, but this is... not worth it," Max complains, spinning in her desk chair.

Lucas grins at her, hanging upside-down off of her bed. "That's a lie, it's totally worth it. Never thought I'd see the day: MadMax Mayfield, bemoaning going out with a pretty girl."

"Ha ha, Sinclair," she rolls her eyes. "The problem's not El and you know it. I just... don't like breakfast and now I have to eat it on a date with her? Ugh."

"Max, come on," he says, trying to appeal to her reason. "It's not a big deal. Just go out with your girlfriend, have a nice night, eat a waffle (just half if you need to), kiss her, and go home."

She sighs dramatically. "But they don't even taste good! Like, why is

she so obsessed with them? It's just... gooey wheat stuff cooked until it's basically a deformed pancake. And I don't even *like* pancakes!"

"Jesus, Max," Lucas laughs. "You know, sometimes, I wonder, 'huh, why did we break up? It was a good relationship. We both liked it. She was very open about her sexuality but that included boys and more specifically me, so we were all good. She was chill.' Then you go bananas over a waffle date."

"You forgot the part where I accidentally fell for the psychic girl," Max snorts, flicking a piece of paper at his forehead, and he tries to dodge but he's still upside-down so he just ends up sliding onto the ground in a heap.

"You're an idiot, Sinclair."

"So I've been told, Mayfield."

Max greets El outside of the diner where El usually works. She's not wearing her uniform, as promised, and instead has gone with jeans that probably are Will's, sneakers that definitely used to belong to Nancy, a button up shirt that is undoubtedly Joyce's, and the nice jacket Max bought her for her birthday last year. Her hair is straight, most likely through the virtue of the hair iron that is El and Mike's joint property (and occasionally Dustin's, if they're all sleep-deprived enough), and brushes her shoulders.

Max suddenly feels a little self-conscious, hyper-aware of her own rumpled button-up, blue sweatshirt, and usual jeans and sneakers. Her wild hair blows into her face and she brushes it back. "You look nice," she says nonchalantly, and her voice sounds foreign to her own ears for a moment because *get it together, Mayfield!*

"Thank you," El replies promptly, smiling. "You do, too."

"Sure," Max laughs. "We'll go with that." She offers El an arm and they link their elbows together, walking into the diner. The girl acting as hostess for the night is unfamiliar and asks for a name, but there's a plan for that.

“Actually,” El says, voice quiet beneath the music and the talking, “could we speak to Jennifer? Tell her Jane and Max are here.” The girl—her name tag reads *Alice*—looks confused, but nods and turns, disappearing into the back. She returns a moment later with Jennifer Hayes in tow, who’s already smiling brightly.

“Jane! Max! Hi!” she chirps, and El grins.

“Hey, Jen,” she says as Jennifer starts to lead them away from a perplexed Alice. “Thanks for the assist.”

“Not a problem,” Jennifer replies, winking at the both of them. “Just wasn’t expecting to see you here tonight, since it’s your day off.”

El laughs. “It turns out this weirdo right here doesn’t like waffles, and this is the best 24-hour breakfast place in town to change that.”

“Playing nice with the manager even on your day off,” Max grins at her. “Also, right, *I’m* the weirdo.”

“So, just a table for two? No Mike and Will tonight?” Jennifer asks, and El shakes her head.

“Yeah, table for two. My brother said they were going to be at our house. I’ll tell them you asked about them, though.”

They stop in front of a door, way in the back, and Jennifer smiles. “As lovely as this conversation is, I should probably just seat you guys and get back. Alice is a good worker but a handful when trying to follow instructions, and we’re still not sure if we can let her in on the secret. Have a nice date, Jane, Max.”

The “secret” being the door they’re in front of—the door behind which is a secret room in the diner for the couples who are... less than conventional, like El and Max or Mike and Will. Or those who aren’t quite couples at all, because according to Nancy, she, Jonathan, and Steve used to frequent the room during her senior year of high school. Sure enough, Jennifer opens the door and there are a few couples in there—though Max does spot Jen’s girlfriend Katie in a corner booth, reading a book alone.

If there’s one thing the Q Room (they’d thought about calling it the

Rainbow Room but it made El wince and was too on-the-nose anyway), as they call it, is good for other than secret dates, it's the fact that you learn who to trust. They'd known about Jen earlier, because Will had become good friends with her a year after the Mind Flayer incident, but then she'd introduced them all to other kids—quite a few more than expected, considering the town.

Jennifer sits them down and doesn't bother giving them menus, instead jotting down a quick waffle order on her notepad. Then she goes over to Katie, says something that makes her laugh, and sweeps out of the room.

There aren't really uncomfortable silences between Max and El anymore—El doesn't talk a lot unless engaged in conversation, so quiet is just something you have to get used to. That, and the tendency to make things float. So they drift in and out of short exchanges, Max rubbing absent circles over El's knuckles on top of the table.

"I'm so glad this place exists," Max says as Jack, another waiter, sets down two waffle plates. El raises an eyebrow, a little startled by the sudden change from talking about sea turtles, but nods to say that she's listening. "You know," she continues. "Just... a place where Troy or anyone won't try to beat us up—not that he could, but still."

Jack grimaces understandingly as he refills their water glasses but doesn't interrupt, which Max appreciates. Once he's gone, Max picks up her fork and knife and hesitantly cuts a piece of waffle.

El fixes her with a stare. "Yeah," she smiles. "I know. I'm glad, too."

Max beams at El, then, because this place is safe, and they're girlfriends, and it's just all so brilliant. And, not that Max will ever admit it, El's smile even makes a waffle taste good.

Author's Note:

hope you enjoyed! comments and kudos are, as always, appreciated.

find me on tumblr, my main is [@fivehargreeves](#) and

my writing blog is [@lowriting!](#)